

Heroin and Emergency Task Force Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
3:00pm – 5:00pm
July 24, 2015

Conference Call Participants

Boyd K. Rutherford
Timothy Cameron
Elizabeth Embry
Julie Solt
Tracey Myers-Preston
Katherine Klausmeier
Bankole Johnson
Nancy Dudley
Linda Williams
Brett Wilson

Not Participating

Michael Finegan

The purpose of the July 24, 2015 conference call was to discuss the Task Force workgroup reports and to reach consensus on which aspects to include in the Interim Report due to Governor Hogan on August 24, 2015.

Lt. Governor Rutherford

Thanked the Task Force members for their service to the State. In preparation for the conference call and the writing of the Interim Report, he reread the minutes from past summits for common themes as well as the workgroup reports. Asked the workgroup co-chairs to each provide updates of their workgroups and to review the main points of their reports.

Bankole Johnson, co-chair of the Quality of Care and Workforce Development Workgroup

Expressed the workgroup's concern about the heroin detoxification process and its affect on the brain. Pursuing detoxification without the use of medication could result in significant negative effects of the brain. Described the notion of creating a Center for Excellence, which would be an entity located in an academic setting, perhaps a public health institute or medical school, that would help the State encourage addiction treatment providers and opioid prescribers to improve and standardize the quality of care provided to patients throughout the State. It was suggested that Harford County might be working on a similar concept.

Tracey Myers-Preston, co-chair of the Access to Treatment and Overdose Prevention Workgroup

The Workgroup examined many issues, from those that could be described as “quick fixes” to more long term options that would improve access to treatment. The workgroup is looking at regional urgent care, what the right level of care is, and which providers have the ability to step in. The workgroup also looked at how to coordinate emergency room programs in hospitals, increase capacity in the provider community, and bolster implementation of SBIRT especially in schools and among young people. Despite funding and capacity disparities, the workgroup noted that local officials need to accurately assess the needs of individual communities. Lastly, workgroup is looking at overdose prevention strategies that are based on best practices and involve use of Naloxone and examining ASO billing codes.

Elizabeth Embry, co-chair of the Intergovernmental Law Enforcement Workgroup

The Workgroup is looking at building on the HIDTA system and introducing a similar statewide system for tracking data. Currently, there is no easy way to share information due to a lot of unnecessary barriers. HIDTA also presents an opportunity for improving crossborder sharing of information. The workgroup is also looking at interdiction of heroin through the postal service and buses like Greyhound, Bolt Bus, and MegaBus. In addition, law enforcement need better access to data held on the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to uncover unlawful practices. The workgroup is looking at proposing legislation as part of its recommendations, but needs to conduct more research on RICO statutes.

Linda Williams, co-chair of the Education, Public Awareness, and Prevention Workgroup

Noted that their subject area is very broad. The workgroup’s workplan is more specific than the report it submitted. The workgroup believes that education includes educating judges as well as getting into classrooms. Teachers also need to be educated. The workgroup is developing the student film festival idea. It is also determining whether metrics to track progress could be developed for their subject area.

Julie Solt, co-chair of the Drug Courts and Reentry Workgroup

There are many drug courts in Maryland, but it isn’t clear what the elements are for getting into each of the drug courts, what services each are providing, and how they differ from each other. Drug courts don’t cover the entire group of people that could be involved. Some programs are perceived to be too difficult and some people would rather simply do their time in jail. The workgroup is looking at ways to make drug courts a more available option; many require salesmanship. We need to promote the benefits of drug courts: people get clean and sober and get jobs afterwards, etc. There could be a state-model that can be detailed for local needs. The workgroup is also looking at day reporting centers as an alternative to explore. The workgroup

hasn't received a lot of detailed info about reentry programs, such as where are they, how do they work, are there grants for new programs, and which ones are working well.

Lt. Governor Rutherford

Thanked the Task Force members for their updates and hardwork and noted that the drafting of the Interim Report will begin very soon. Ended the conference call.

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